Fall Color Report – October 2, 2020

Northwest
Roadsides have lost the bright yellow of the wild sunflowers and the goldenrods' greenish yellow has begun to fade. Mowed roadsides are staying green; dogwoods and sumac continue to turn maroon (sumac turning scarlet). Walnut and birch leaves continue to yellow and hackberry leaves are beginning to turn yellow. Maples vary widely, with red maples showing patches of crimson, and sugar maples turning yellow and pinkish orange. One recent change is Virginia creeper vines in trees that are quickly turning a dark orange/red. Crops continue to mature with corn stalks more beige and bean leaves are brownish yellow (many bean fields have lost their leaves and are brown and grayish brown).

Northeast
In the northeast region, the fall color show is just beginning in urban and rural areas. Leaf watchers are seeing yellows emerging in the locusts, walnuts and oaks, but not in a showy manner as of yet. A few of the maples have begun to turn red.

The berries of False Solomon's Seal at Volo Bog State Natural Area

Near the I&M Canal Trail in Grundy Co.

Hints of color at Starved Rock State Park

Central

Fall color is beginning and advancing toward the predicted peak of mid-October in central Illinois. It is most evident in flat and low-lying forests while pure upland oak stands are now just beginning to start their color change. Walnuts, elms, and cottonwoods are yellowing and the Virginia creeper and poison ivy vines are reddening across central Illinois. Browns, yellows, and red colors are beginning to offer nice viewing across the countryside.

In east central counties, cooler weather is making for quicker fall color changes along edges and in trees that have been stressed by dry weather. Leaf watchers are seeing yellows in the black walnuts and green ashes, with more orange and yellow in the hickories, sugar maples and sassafras. The Virginia creeper and poison ivy vines are turning bright red in some areas. Areas that still have white ash trees are seeing leaves that are showing a deep purple color.
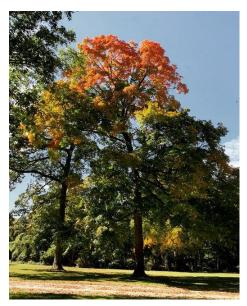

Five-leaf aralia in Urbana

West Central
In west central Illinois, maples are starting to pop. Walnut leaves are yellow – and walnuts are dropping leaves quickly. Sumac is spotty with brilliant reds and Virginia creeper plants are showing deep maroon. White ash leaves are turning purple, and green ash leaves are starting to yellow. Oaks are not doing much yet, while cottonwoods and silver maples are showing yellows.

Through Adams, Brown, Calhoun, Pike, Scott, Jersey, Macoupin, and Greene counties, leaf watchers are seeing the beginnings of autumn color. Cottonwoods, silver maples, walnuts, Paw Paws, and buckeyes are starting to yellow; sugar maples and ashes are showing hints of yellow/red/purple; small patches of sumac and isolated, individual sassafras and dogwoods are starting to redden. Green is still dominant in 80 - 85% of foliage in the region.

Silver maple at Pere Marquette State Park

South
In the upper reaches of the southern counties, sassafras is continuing to turn red and yellow; some of the sumacs along the roadsides are turning red; some of the branches on the sugar maples are starting to turn yellow; some of the Virginia creeper vines are turning red. Some white ash leaves are turning red.

With the cooler temperatures, a bit more color can be seen in the woodlands at areas like Giant City State Park. Sassafras, maples, tulip poplars and sweet gums are all starting to show hints of color. The winged sumac and Virginia creeper are both exhibiting bright pops of red. Persimmon fruit is beginning to ripen.

Mostly green views at Giant City State Park this week

Farther south, most of the landscape is late-summer green. At Cache River State Natural Area, the flowering and red twig dogwoods are showing quite a bit of red in their leaves; sweet gums are showing red, orange, and yellow; water tupelo trees are showing their yellows; sugar maples and red maples are showing red. Silver maples are looking pale; sassafras is showing more orange with red.